DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 407 013 JC 970 197

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TITLE	Internationalizing the Curriculum: A Case Study in the Business Division.
PUB DATE	Feb 97
NOTE	7p.; In: Walking the Tightrope: The Balance between Innovation and Leadership. Proceedings of the Annual International Conference of the Chair Academy (6th, Reno, NV, February 12-15, 1997); see JC 970 185.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Business Education; Business Education Facilities; Community Colleges; *Curriculum Development; Grants; *International Education; *International Educational Exchange; International Relations; *International Trade; Marketing; *School Business Relationship; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	Waukesha County Technical College WI

ABSTRACT

Internationalizing the business curriculum means integrating the processes of international culture into an educational setting to give students a more comprehensive understanding of the business world. As part of its efforts to internationalize the curriculum, Wisconsin's Waukesha County Technical College established an Associate degree in international trade. The International Trade Division (ITD), which assists businesses with marketing and international trade, helped the college to develop technicians with international skills and to understand international practices related to import and export. Funding for the ITD was obtained through two grants, which allowed the college to hire a grant facilitator and implement such strategies for internationalization as sending resistant decision makers on international experiences to help them understand the benefits of internationalization, enrolling faculty in conferences, and bringing businesses to the college to discuss their needs and problems with international trade. The grants also covered faculty trips to foreign countries and stipends for curriculum development. Outside the grants, the ITD developed export training videos and catalogs for other institutions and businesses, and other countries were invited to send students, faculty, and administrators to the United States. Other programs included a statewide summer institute held in 1996 and a Developing a Curriculum (DACUM) process. (HAA)

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ED 407 013

INTERNATIONALIZING THE CURRICULUM: A CASE STUDY IN THE BUSINESS DIVISION

By

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Paper Presented at the
Sixth Annual International Conference for
Community & Technical College Chairs, Deans, and Other Organizational Leaders
February 12 - 15, 1997
Reno, Nevada

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Biographical Sketch:

M. Dee Warzyn has worked for the college since 1991 as a part-time instructor in the Business Division teaching computer programs. She has coordinated the Continuing Education Department since 1995. Prior to working with WCTC, she obtained a varied work background including: inside sales, office manager, area manager and restaurant trainer. She has a Bachelors in Business Administration from University Wisconsin-Eau Claire and Marketing and Business Education Certificates from University Wisconsin-Whitewater. She is currently studying for a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction

What is Internationalizing the Curriculum? In its broadest sense it means integrating international culture's processes to an educational setting. Bringing into each classroom, in the course of the semester, the realization that there is more to the business world than just the United States. In the business world there is an international market, financial conversion implications, as well as different languages to be spoken in the core of business. Students need to be exposed to the global perspective throughout a program. With the opening of new markets and the explosion of the Internet, (two catalysts among many), virtually everyone can compete in business.

Internationalizing the curriculum at most institutions will have multiple steps. The institution must recognize the need and then plan for the implementation.

> **The International/Intercultural Policy adopted by the College states it must provide "educational programs and technical assistance to serve area employers who have export or imports as part of their product mix and to develop within students a knowledge and understanding of the international marketplace through infusing an international dimension into present educational programs."**

In 1984, at Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC), the college formed the Trade Center and established the International Trade Associate degree. The formation of the International Trade Division began assisting business with international trade, marketing, developing technicians with international skills, and understanding international practices for import and export. These practices are continued with today.

Another reason for the formation of the International Trade Division was the economy of the world was becoming more intertwined, and it was more apparent to all businesses. The need to be able to trade, compete and work with other businesses around the globe was apparent.

To begin to internationalize the curriculum, vision at the top of the college's administration was critical to the involvement of the faculty and division administration. Both the President of the College as well as the Dean of the Business Division were committed to the importance of internationalizing the curriculum.

Once the vision was clear at the top, internationalizing the curriculum began with the International Trade Division writing for and receiving two grants from the federal government for a total of $320,000. The grants were US Department of Education; Business and International Education, Title VI-B, and each was two years in length, running consecutively. The grants commenced in 1992 and ended in 1996.

Upon successfully receiving the grants, a grant facilitator was hired. Strategies were then put in place to begin to implement the internationalization. The first was to send resistant decision makers on international experiences. First hand experience helped convey the necessity and benefits of internationalizing the curriculum. The grants also covered travel money and conference enrollments for instructors and administrators, and stipend money for curriculum writing. The grant facilitator conducted individual interviews with faculty and administrators and put notices out for all faculty to read. The facilitator also attended department meetings, made announcements at staff/instructor inservices, wrote memos, had past participants give presentations on their trips to others in the school, and composed newsletters. The newsletter has been particularly well received and continues today.

Another strategy employed was to bring in businesses to discuss their needs and problems with international trade and how the current programs and processes were not supplying the workers with the skill levels they required. Having businesses voice their needs was beneficial for faculty and administrators to hear, which brought the necessity much closer into view.

Faculty began traveling under the grants. Two instructors in Marketing, one in Financial Planning, and one in Office Systems visited South Africa, Hungary, Russia, and Germany. Three associate deans traveled to Russia, Hungary and Brazil. Thirteen other instructors in the Business Division did not travel, but received stipend for curriculum. Each writer received approximately $700. All faculty in the departments where international curriculum was written use the new curriculum. All students and instructors benefit from the experience and gain additional knowledge of a global perspective. Curriculum was written for a total of 17 different subject areas.

In addition, (outside the grants), the International Trade Division has developed export training videos and catalogs for other institutions and businesses to purchase for their own use. These videos detail steps and processes for international trade as well as international transportation, marketing, export documentation, sales negotiation, and overseas business etiquette

As the college became more in tune with the international experience need, other country's were invited to send their students, faculty and administrators to the United States. Countries participating included Germany, Scotland and Denmark. One college-wide goal under discussion is to develop an exchange program for the students in compatible or similar programs a chance to travel and experience an international project as part of their learning experience. Two students from Denmark were able to visit and work in US companies. One student completed a project at Ameritech and the other at Waukesha County Department of Administration. They were able to work on a supervised project in computer programming, enhancing their understanding of their subject area as well seeing it in the global arena.

Groups from other countries have come to visit the State's technical college system. Four administrators and a Board member from Scotland and 16 faculty and administrators from Germany have all visited so far. Faculty and administrators in this country and abroad, compared and contrasted: curriculum, learning objectives, student assessment, program processes, and student and faculty facilities. One Board member visiting this country was very interested in comparing WCTC's implementation of the Carver method for the College's Board of Governors. His college was also implementing the Carver method.

Another program implemented statewide was the Summer Institute to internationalize the curriculum for all state technical schools. Held for the first time the summer of 1996, the program attracted 200 people. The three day program addressed how programs can incorporate the global perspective and reported on what others were doing to internationalize the curriculum. Also a state wide DACUM (**D**evelop **A** **CU**rriculu**M**) was conducted for technical colleges to identify international competencies for technical college graduates from any program.

The grants were a success; the goals of 17 curriculum projects and sending seven people traveling abroad were both achieved. All instructors are able to bring more into classroom by using the internationalized curriculum. Also, the college was better prepared to assist with several companies in the international market through better prepared graduates as well as videos, and contract training.

The next step to be taken at WCTC includes continuing on with the faculty awareness and need for international curriculum across the college, not just the Business Division. A new initiative includes writing for another grant to focus on more cultural and language activities across the College.

WCTC will continue with the international newsletter, export training program for business, broadening/developing international market research

program (targeting markets), learning about foreign markets, and regulations. Another area of continued focus is the exchange program for students in Associate Degree programs.

Internationalizing the curriculum has benefited the College by providing lifetime experiences with a global perspective. The College and the community will both continue to receive returns on this investment with the increased understanding of the diversity and qualities of the other cultures of the world.